



July 13, 2001

**SUBJECT:** Implementation of the New Contracting Officer's  
Representative Certification Program

**TO:** MRP Distribution List

Congress mandated the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), Office of Management and Budget, to promote the development of a professional acquisition workforce by establishing governmentwide policies and standards for skill-based training to perform contracting duties. On September 21, 2000, the Department issued Departmental Regulation (DR-5001-1) to implement OFPP's Policy Letter 97-01. The regulation requires all USDA agencies to identify *acquisition workforce personnel* and provide competency-based training. The *acquisition workforce* includes employees in the GS-1102 and 1105 series and Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs).

MRP's CORs will need to comply with the mandatory acquisition training and experience requirements outlined in DR 5001-1. This means that any program personnel who are or will be designated as a COR by a contracting officer must take the minimum mandatory procurement training outlined in the regulation. You can obtain a copy of the regulation at [www.usda.gov/ocio/directives/DR](http://www.usda.gov/ocio/directives/DR).

Contracting Officers will determine the COR certification level needed for each new or existing contract, based on the complexity of the administrative responsibilities for each contract. MRP program managers will be required to develop a training plan for employees who require more than a Level 1 certification, fund the training, and ensure that their program areas have a cadre of trained personnel sufficient to meet their requirements.

Our implementation plan requires that all *currently* designated CORs complete the Level 1 mandatory training by February 2001. CORs can download a copy of the Federal Acquisition Institute's (FAI) *Contracting Officer's Representative's Workbook*, including the governmentwide training curricula for CORs at <http://www.gsa.gov/staff/v/training.htm>. In lieu of formal classroom training instruction, CORs may obtain Level 1 training from the FAI's on-line university at <http://www.gsa.gov/staff/v/training.htm>. The on-line course is free to all USDA employees. FAI estimates that it will take employees not familiar with the federal acquisition process approximately 45 hours to complete the on-line course. CORs requiring higher levels of training must meet both classroom and on-the-job-training skill levels (see Appendix G of DR 5000-1).

We are currently in the process of identifying current and planned contracts requiring CORs above Level 1. Additional time will be permitted for these CORs to receive their training.

The Administrative Services Enhancement Unit is currently drafting an Administrative Notice that will describe the program and its requirements in more detail. In the meantime, please be prepared to have your currently designated CORs take the minimum mandatory training as soon as possible by registering for 40 hours of classroom training or completing the FAI on-line course by February 2001.

A completion record with test scores is computer-generated by FAI when the last course module is passed. Please ensure this record and any certificates from formal classroom training are sent to Sandra Case at:

USDA, APHIS, ASEU, PPPT  
14th & Independence Avenue, SW,  
STOP 3451, Room 0758  
Washington, D.C. 20250

All CORs must obtain 24 hours of training every 2 years. Failure to meet this maintenance requirement will result in the termination of the employee's COR Certification.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Case on (202) 720-7599.

/s/

Joanne Munno  
Head of the Contracting Activity Designee  
Marketing and Regulatory Programs